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C O M P R E H E N S I V E
M E T H O D
O F
P R A Y E R .

Translated from the G E R M A N .

And published for a farther *Promo-*
tion, Knowledge and Benefit of In-
WARD P R A Y E R .

By a *Lover of Internal Devotion.*

The Second Edition with Addition.

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Short, Easy, and Comprehensive
 M E T H O D
 O F
 P R A Y E R, &c.

FOR as much as internal Prayer is so weighty a Point, that one may call it the only Means to attain to Perfection in this Life, and to kindle the pure and disinterested Love in our Hearts; and as all Christians (who will indeed be such) are called to this State of pure Love and perfection, and will, by the power of this Call, have the necessary Grace offered to them, to attain to such a State: so this inward prayer suits all persons, even the most simple and ignorant, who are also capable of performing this Order or Manner of prayer.

This brings us soonest to the Union with and Conformity to the Will of God: so that by the Resignation to, the Union with and the Change of our Wills into the Will of

God, after many Vicissitudes, Trials and purifyings in and after this Life, we shall find ourselves so settled and stablished, that we shall not find any more Self-love in us; but that we only will what God wills, and the Will of God is become wholly our Will.

That this can and must be done here in this Life (although hereafter a greater Consummation follows, is an incontestable Thing: since Jesus Christ in the Lord's Prayer has taught us to pray that his Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Now if this losing or sinking of our Wills into the Will of God, could not be done by us here so as it is done by the Blessed in Heaven, Jesus Christ would not have commanded us to pray for it: For, how can we suppose that he would have commanded us to pray for something that is without Foundation and a mere Fancy?

Hence we may easily see, that in all Ages this inward prayer has been performed, since Men have always prayed for the Fulfilling of the Will of God; and that it is no new Invention, as some will say: seeing Jesus Christ spent his whole Life in inward Prayer; and the Evangelist Luke tells us, that he continued in it whole Nights.

Neither is this inward prayer a Matter for the Wise and Learned only, and not also for

for the Simple and Unlearned, as some imagine : For whereby can the true Christians be distinguished from other people, but by inward prayer ? And when St. Paul exhorts us to pray without ceasing, (which can only be done by inward prayer) does he exclude one individual Person ? Does he not speak to all ?

Inward prayer is not less for every one, than Faith, Hope, and Charity or Love, which are Virtues belonging properly to true Christians : since, after the obtaining of them, their Operations can be only inwardly performed ; and this internal Working or production is the performance of a very good prayer. And this is also the Case with respect to the performance of other Virtues, which depend on or proceed from the aforesaid, and which belong to Religion and the Worship of God, that is, the Work of Adoration, praise, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

Where is now the Christian, that will be a true one, who is not obliged to perform this, at least internally in his Heart, without uttering it always with his Mouth, or shewing it in outward performance ?

Those then, who through a wretched Blindness pretend and say, that inward Prayer is not for all, that all Christians need

not perform this inward prayer; and say nevertheless, that all Christians should be taught (as they take upon them to do) the internal practice of the aforesaid Virtues, that is, to believe, to hope and to love; they do thereby teach to perform inward prayer, and thus manifestly contradict themselves, in denying a Thing the confirming of which at the same time they cannot avoid.

Therefore all are called to this Way and to this End, to will naught but what God wills, namely through the Means of inward prayer to return into their Origin, which is God; whose Goodness is infinite, and who does not cease of offering the necessary Means to all those whom he has called, and effectually to impart them to those who are willing to make use of them; if they were but faithfull in the Use of these Means, (as with the Assistance of divine Grace they may) and if they would only suffer themselves to be conducted in this Way and this End: but very few obtain it, for Want of Constancy: which does not consist, in being upon our Guard by our own Activity and self-pleasing Endeavours, or to watch over ourselves, and to be given unto much Working; but herein consists Faithfulness, that we believe and resign ourselves to God.

Believe

Believe that God is *all Goodness* and *almighty*: *all Goodness*, never to forsake those who have devoted themselves to him; *almighty*, to support and protect us. The second point of this Faithfulness is the Resignation or blind Giving up, which is void of Self-interest; and suffers itself to be led by God as a blind Man by his Leader.

O ye poor Souls, who have been so long lamenting under the Captivity of Sin! Why do you not commit yourselves to God, and why do you not devote yourselves to him by inward prayer? you would hereby soon be rectified.

Inward prayer is the Nourishment of the Soul; it is in this holy Rest that the Soul obtains that Strength which is so needful for her; take this Nutriment from her, and she will presently be disheartened, yea, often-times fall into a deadly Dejection.

As to the Way and Manner of performing this inward prayer, there is one, which is of such a Nature, that no Man can be put into it: this is the passive prayer. But there is also an active prayer, into the Way of which all Men ought be set. This active prayer may be performed in two Ways, one with Words out of the Heart, (either with the Mouth or in Thoughts) and the other is the prayer of the Heart, without Words or Thoughts: and this is incomparably

parably more beneficial than the other, and far more acceptable to God; which may be perceived as well by the Blessing of God that attends it, as by the Effects and Fruits thereof.

For one may pray without forming or uttering of any Words, without Consideration or Speculation of the Mind, without holding rational Discourses, or making Conclusions, yea, without knowing the least Thing in a Manner relative to the outward Senses: and this prayer is the prayer of the Heart, the unutterable prayer; the most perfect of which is the Fruit of Love, and the less perfect, a Sensibility of our Indigences; in the former the pure Love prays, and resigns itself to God, but in the latter the necessitous and straitned Heart lays itself open before God.

O how eloquent is Necessity! There is no need to instruct a poor Beggar, what he must pray for, and in what Manner his petition ought to be worded.

Now, our Lord commanding us to pray without ceasing, he does not command us a Thing impossible: (no more than Saint Paul) wherefore we must see what Sort of a prayer constant prayer is.

Verbal prayer (though it is good in its Kind, if performed according to the true

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Intent, that the Words or Thoughts flow from the Affections of the Heart to God) cannot be without ceasing : a thousand Things will interrupt it; and it is well known to every one, that verbal prayer cannot be constant. That is to say, One cannot always in a perceptible Manner actually think on God, or speak with him in express Words, without being obstructed in it by the Interventions of Sleep, Business, or the external Objects and Necessities of this Life: we must obey our Superiours, assist and comfort our Neighbours; and often the Duties of our Condition and Office oblige us to be constantly busy and conversing with Men.

Neither can Contemplation be a perpetual prayer: for not to mention the Difficulties that attend constant Contemplation, it is not properly a prayer, considered in all its parts; as long as the Understanding only and not the Will also is employed in it. Moreover, nothing can be perpetual what passes in the Understanding by rationally Considering and Judging, because of the Weakness and Velocity of the human Understanding.

Ejaculations, (so called) though they are the most excellent prayers, since they proceed from our Thinking on God and the Inclination of the Heart ; yet even they cannot be incessant.

All

All these Sorts of prayers (if they are not used superfluously) are good to lead us into never-ceasing prayer: in the same manner as the Sacrifices of the old Testament were a preparation for the everlasting Offering, which is the Resignation of Christ and his Followers.

Now remains only to shew, that there is a prayer which may be performed at all Times and in all places: which by nothing can be interrupted but by Sin and Unfaithfulness.

This inward prayer is performed in the Spirit of the inward Man through Faith and Love: and therefore is justly called the prayer of Faith and Love.

This prayer of Faith is simple, pure, universal, and obscure; without observing or distinguishing plainly the Affections, Words or what one prays for: and, as nothing can put Bounds to its vast Extend; so is nothing able to interrupt it, or to make it cease. And so the prayer of the Will, or the prayer of divine Love, which consists in the entire Inclination of the Heart towards the Supreme Good, which is God, can be as little or rather less interrupted: since the Heart is never weary of loving.

This incessant prayer now consists in an everlasting Inclination of the Heart to God: which Inclination flows from Love. This

Love

Love draws the Presence of God into us: so that, as by the Operation of divine Grace the Love to God is generated in us, so is also the presence of Grace increased by this Love; that such prayer is performed in us, without us or our Cogitation. It is the same as with a Person living in the Air, and drawing it in with his Breath, without thinking, that by it he lives and breathes; because he does not reflect upon it. Wherefore this Way is called a mystical Way: that is, a secret and incomprehensible Way. In one Word, the prayer of the Heart may be performed at all Times: though the Heart cannot think or speak at all Times.

Besides this never-ceasing prayer of the Heart, there is another more expressive and more particular prayer, which is performed at certain Times appointed for that purpose; then the Soul is solely engaged with God, and all other Occupation put off. This particular prayer is performed either at the appointed Times, when we are in an active State; or at such Times which are indicated by the Drawing of the inward Spirit, when we find ourselves in a passive State.

It is a Delusion, to imagine, that since we enjoy the presence of God the whole Day, we need take no other regular Time for the performance of the inward prayer.

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The presence of God is the Fruit and farther propagation or Increase of this inward prayer: and those who omit the performing of it at certain Times, under whatever pretence it may be, will not long retain the divine presence in their daily Occupations.

I know very well, that it is not always necessary to pray at a certain regular Hour; if we are hindered by unavoidable Accidents: but we must however take some Time daily to perform this prayer. We give Nourishment to our Bodies; therefore let us also give Nourishment to our Souls, We spend so much Time idly; let us dedicate a part of it to God; which part alone will be called Time not lost.

Now the Soul that will perform this inward prayer, has in the Beginning only two Exercises to use towards her Excitation: First, the Representation of the presence of God. And since it is a Truth belonging to the Christian Faith, that the infinite Majesty of God and the whole adorable Trinity fills all Things; so must the Soul undertake an inward Exercise of this Faith, and stir herself up, firmly believing this Truth, that God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost is in her, as well as in the place where she is, and in all places, truly present.

Secondly, after this Exercise of Faith,
and

and Stirring up, the Soul must practise a resigned committing herself into his fatherly Hands, most sincerely resolving to dedicate herself, her inward and outward Man, with all her Faculties and performances, to his most holy Will ; that with regard to her he may direct and order every thing according to this his good Will, in her prayer and out of it, in Time and Eternity.

Thus it is necessary in the Beginning to kindle the Fire by Working ; but afterwards, when once it is kindled, to let it burn.

When this is done, then the Soul has no more to do the whole Time of prayer but to remain in peace and Silence ; endeavouring to continue in this loving Remembrance of God, who is so truly present in her, as He is in Heaven.

O ! whoever you are, that have not yet a constant Custom and Promptitude to perform this inward prayer ! you know the Lord's Prayer, in which you have enough to perform this mental or inward prayer, although you knew nothing else. Every petition of it contains so much, that one may perform a good long ardent Contemplation on it : but when these petitions are repeated, and we penetrate into them livingly, or ruminante on them in our Hearts, it has a quite different Effect than when they are uttered

with the Mouth only. Experience will teach it you.

Here the Soul does nothing but lay her Complaints before God: since he, who loves discretely, does not concern himself how to pray for what he wants, but only to propose his Need, leaving it to the Lord to do as he thinks best: After the manner of Lazarus's Sisters, who did not send him Word that he should come and restore their Brother to Health; but that he whom He loved, was sick.

And this for three Reasons: First, Because our Lord knows better than we ourselves what is best for us. Secondly, Since God has more Compassion, when he sees the Necessities and Resignation of him whom he loves; and, Thirdly, Because the Soul is better secured from Selfishness and Self Love in merely exposing her Wants, than in praying for what she thinks is needful for her.

The Soul, in representing her Necessities, behaves in such a manner, and may be considered as saying, Tell the Lord, since I am sick, and He alone is my Cure, that he would effect the Recovery of my Health; and as I have Trouble and Toil, and He alone is my Rest, that he would grant me the Enjoyment of my Good and my Rest; and as I am dying, and He alone is my Life, that he would give me Life.

How

How did it come, that Hannah, the Mother of Samuel, prayed the Lord for a Son silently, and that her prayer was a prayer of Silence? The Reason is, because it was a petition of Faith, which is performed without the Sound of Words, in Submission to the Will of God: And though the same Hannah was inspired by the Spirit of God, yet she made her prayer without Words.

When it is requisite that we should petition God for something, we ought to be silent; because we know not what to pray for, nor how to pray: but if we are silent, the Holy Ghost himself prays for us with unutterable Sighs. But what does this Holy Ghost, who supports us in our InfirmitieS, pray for? He only prays for that which is good and perfect; because he prays purely for the Will of God, that it may be done. Therefore our petitions must be mere Exhibitions before God, accompanied with Veneration and Silence.

This is properly the prayer of the pure giving-up or presentation, or what is called the prayer of Innocence; which prays without saying any thing, and awaiteth all without asking any Thing, and desires with Submission to the Will of God, whether he will grant what is desired or deny it; and obtains more than it dare venture to pray for.

This prayer of the pure giving-up fol-

Iows after the prayer of the Affections : here the Soul does nothing else but present herself before God ; which is something very innocent.

In the Gospel we find Examples of both Sorts of these prayers : the Language of the one, which is the prayer of the Affections, is : Have Mercy upon me, make me whole ; the other manner of prayer is, If thou wilt, thou canst make me whole.

This prayer is a naked presentation of the Things we pray for, after which we leave them as they are, in a perfect Indifferency : it is a dumb Prayer, and much more powerful than any other ; and it is the prayer which God does almost constantly hear.

The Soul having thus presented herself before God, he instructs her in the Way of his Commandments : for God takes Delight in instructing the Soul, as soon as the Soul is attentive.

Even this I desire of you, that your prayers may be simple, without a Multiplicity of Words, so that God, who pours out his Spirit upon the simple, may himself be your prayer : simple in Thoughts abandoning and not entertaining them ; simple in Understanding, depending wholly upon God.

Suppose you find your Mind dispersed,
if

if you do but not consent to it, but continue firm in your Will to be present with your prayer for to love God, you will be acceptable in this Love to God.

For our parts, we should and can do so much as to refrain from all Thoughts and Words, (those excepted to which the Circumstances of our Condition, Business and Office oblige us) and to avoid all rational Cogitations, all Forms and Figures, not only during the Time of our prayer ; but also all Day long, that as soon as they appear, we suppress them without Admittance.

I have long ago very well conceived, how necessary it is not to suffer any Thought to enter into the Mind, neither good nor bad, and to be free from all Figures and Images, in order to perform the inward prayer.

We ought not to believe, that such a State of inward Silence is Indolence or Loss of Time; by no means: on the contrary, the Soul is then more active than ever; since she is practising Faith, Hope and Love; Faith, in that she believes in God the Father, Son and holy Ghost, and is resigned to Him, who is so truly present in her as he is in Heaven; Hope, since she would by no means abide in this State of inward Silence and prayer, if she did not hope thereby to please God; but she practises still better the Virtue of Love, in that she is all this while

resigned and given up to the Will of God.

Let this then henceforth be our prayer: because in such a reverential Silence the great Virtues are so nobly practised, but chiefly for the sake of pure Love.

As God is a pure Spirit, he requires a Worship agreeable to his Nature: and although the other Sorts of Worship are good and holy, yet they are not so properly adapted, and there is no such Affinity between them and his Essence: as a Spirit, a spiritual Worship belongs to him: we cannot worship in Spirit without worshiping in Truth; since the Spirit of the self-existent Word is Truth, and the Spirit of Truth; and all other Methods of Worship are creaturely, and often performed through Selfishness and directed by Self-interest.

We deceive ourselves in our Ideas and Conceptions of God: and therefore that Adoration which is formed according to our Ideas can never agree or be similar with what God really is. Let us then acknowledge, that the Adoration which is performed in Spirit and in Truth only is acceptable to God.

And it is this Worship which the self-existent Word, Jesus Christ, by his Spirit worketh in us: as St. Paul attesteth, saying, that the Spirit prays within us. But the Spirit prays within us according to what he himself

himself is, that is, after a pure spiritual Manner.

Hence it is clear and manifest, that the true inward prayer cannot be performed in us than by the Operation of the Holy Ghost. For, since we are not able to pronounce with any piety or due Reverence the dearest Name of JESUS, or call JESUS LORD in Truth, without the particular Assistance of the Holy Ghost; how much less can we of ourselves with our whole Heart, pray in such a Manner as may be acceptable to him? and not knowing what we shall pray, nor how to pray as we ought; must not the Spirit then pray for us with unutterable Sighs? and must not the same that searcheth the Hearts, that is God, since he knows what the Holy Ghost in the Spirit of the inward Man desireth, must he not therefore cause him to pray in us?

Now where the Spirit of God is, there is Freedom, and none may be so insolent, or bestow unnecessary Labours, to prescribe Rules and Limits for such an one. Therefore there must be no compelling to any particular Degree of prayer, but to open the Heart to the Holy Spirit, and resign it wholly to him; that so he may according to the Strength and power of his gracious Drawings, incline the Heart in all Freedom, either to speak or to be silent, either

to

to call upon God, or to hearken to him, either to pray for some particular Grace, or to pray for nothing; but to do nothing more than to admire and love, to discover something, or to partake of some sensible Evidence of Grace, or to perceive nothing: either to be in Fervency, or in Drynes: either in Strenght or in Weakness; either in Light, or in Darkness: either full of Comfort and Sweetness, or peevishnes and Irksomenes: either in a secret incomprehensible Way, or in Sensibility. Whereby it is not difficult to discern this divine Drawing, by the Sweetness and the purity of its Working, and on the Impossibility to do otherwise: On the contrary, what is done or performed through the Self-working of our own Spirit, is hard, inconvenient, contrary, unfruitful, unpleasant, and what cannot well be done, or kept without Violence.

The Scripture calls the Lord the JEHOVAH, the Eternal God, to give us to understand, that he is always God, and as God is always to be prayed to, and called upon, and that thereon must all our Service to God and all our prayers be for ever founded: therefore Jesus Christ himself saith, that we should pray always and not faint or be weary: and St. Paul wills, that we pray without ceasing.

But it is only the State of Faith which can make prayers incessant: thus Abraham

(the

(the Father of the Faithful, and the Man, who had the greatest Faith that ever was) was therein confirmed; so he called on the Name of God in all places: for as he kept himself in a continual State of prayer, so he left Tokens of his prayers, Worship and Offerings, in all places behind him.

But that we may keep this Spirit of prayer, (which should unite us to the Lord) so as to continue in this incessant prayer, we must observe two principal Things: The first Thing is, that we give this Spirit Nourishment: The second is, that we refrain from all Things that may endanger us of loosing it.

That which gives the Spirit Nourishment, is the Reading of profitable Books, at proper Times and orderly, (especially the holy Scriptures) the actual prayer at certain Times, the often repeated looking inwardly, or Collection of the Mind all Day long, and now and then to throw off all Business, and present one's self in Stilness before God, when we observe it to be needful, or when we are advised to it by experienced people of whom we ask Advice.

But that which makes us lose the Spirit of prayer, such as Sin, Converse with worldly people, especially with Libertines, and those of false Devotion, should make us fearful and keep us very careful and reserved.

But

But when we discover that we have committed a Failing through Haste, or even willfully, we must immediately return most innocently, sincere & earnestly to Jesus Christ, more or less in an acting Manner, according to the Degree the Soul is in of an acting or suffering State.

Accordingly we must pray and walk in the divine presence; be not too busy with outward Things, keep the Flesh in Subjection, deny ourselves and our inordinate Inclinations, since this must keep pace with the inward prayer, for that from this is inseparable, for we must not be deceived; without inward prayer there is no Conquest over the Flesh, and without this Conquest over the flesh no true inward prayer, and without this the one & the other is no conversion, no true internal Life, no perfection or Christianity.

This Subduing or Mortifying must be. That the inward prayer may be of the right Kind, so must this Subduing keep pace with inward prayer, and so we must not spare or favour ourselves in any Thing whatsoever: The Affections of the Mind and Senses must be still tamed according as the inward prayer advanceth; and the first Work of the true inward prayer is even this Subduing of the Senses and Affections of the Mind; since it hinders and disturbs prayer, so we must always strive against it, until

until God, through his Working, has far exceeded the Workings of Nature, whereby he deprives the human Nature of all power of Working, and he himself through himself, after a more powerful Manner, subdues the inordinate Affections and Senses.

Thus must we be very faithful in the Beginning to accustom ourselves to suppress and mortify all Evils, that nothing may escape our Notice; and afterwards in perseverance in a spiritual Life, will more Care be required to free ourselves from our own Self-workings, and admit the Workings of God in their Room, not to work & pray by our own Power, but that the Spirit of God in us may do it.

In this State we perform a powerful prayer, the prayer of Jesus Christ, and through his Spirit: The Soul can then no more pray with Cogitation, and make conclusive Reasonings; since she is found in a continual and working prayer. All what the Soul is and what is in her prays through and in Jesus Christ; and being not intent upon her own Will, nor thinking discerningly on what she prays for; she receives at once what she has need of. O what a power has prayer with God! But what prayer? The inward prayer of Silence, the Inclination of the Heart to God, without Thoughts, Words or Images; where we expect and wait for all from the power and Mercy of God.

Those

Those who perform this prayer, obtain therein so much Strength, that they are not only comforted themselves, but they also comfort others who are oppreised.

Here it may be asked, if we after this Manner shall pray in an unobservable and private Way, by nakedly prostrating before God, what need is there then of other Methods and Manner of prayer? This is a Question which is often made. If all Men entered into the Way of Contemplation, what need then of Working or Acting?

Acting is therefore not less needful; it is the Door and preparation to lead to Contemplation: All young Beginners in Christianity must begin here in Working, even as when some die, others are constantly born; which gives us to understand, that there is no State (be it which it will) wherein we must not use this inward prayer, and the Subduing of the old Man. Young Men and young Maidens, Married and Unmarried, Princes & Princesses, Kings and Queens, Magistrates, Merchants and Tradesmen, there is not one who cannot and must not use this prayer of the Heart and of Love, and strive to subdue the Affections of the Mind and Senses.

We must also take diligent Care with what people we converse; so must we also reserve the needful Hours wherein to converse with no Man, but with God in prayer

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For I could never yet conceive how a Man could be right in his Internals, and yet be negligent in prayer; therefore I have always, as much as I could, strove against those people, who say, when a Man has so far attained to the inward spiritual Life, there was no need any more to observe particular Hours for internal prayers: Who can compare himself with Christ, who spent whole Nights in prayer?

I know very well, that in certain Offices, and on Occasions which may accidentally happen, we need not scruple to pass over the Time of prayer, in order to fulfil other Duties that Providence puts in our Way: which happening once, we must not make a practice of it, but as soon as possible take to our prayers again: for herein consists the whole inward State of Christianity.

People that are in honourable posts of Service, have so much troublesome Business to do, that they have hardly any Time to spare to converse with God in prayer, if they do not earnestly press on, & wisely manage their Time. Let us have never so little Inclination to pass away the Time with needless Things, and with neglecting of the more needful, we shall not find the Hours again which were ordained either for God or for our Neighbour. We must therefore be stedfast, and make a firm Resolution, the positive Obser-

vation of which may seem to go too far; but without observing it, all Things will go into Disorder; we are confused and negligent; we lose our spiritual Strength; we withdraw unobserved from God; we follow our own Lusts; and we are not aware of our Confusion whereinto we are fallen, till we are in it, and till we have no Hopes ever to come out of it again.

O let us pray! Let us pray! prayer is our only Safety. Blessed be the Lord, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his Mercy from me, Ps. lxvi. 20. But that we may be constant in prayer, so must we be faithful to do all our Busines the whole Day through with such a Steadiness, that nothing may make us wavering.

This prayer, which is performed in outward Busines, is a Fruit of the inward prayer, or prayer of Silence; it is like the Heat of a Stove, which holds long, though you put no more Wood in; it is the Anointing of prayer; it is the Smell of the precious Incense, which has spread itself abroad; it is a hidden Taste of the heavenly Manna, wherewith we are fed; it is a cooling and refreshing of the Water which we have drank; it is an Impression of the Love and Presence of God in the Heart itself, which is continued in the performing of our Busines, and which serves to call a Man back

back to his inward Business, when he has been scattered outwardly. And instead of suffering the Mind to rove, when we rise up from inward prayer, which is performed at set Times, we should rather take Care to preserve what we have therein received, as a precious powerful Water, which we must be careful not to let evaporate.

The Fire of Love and Fervour is kindled in and through prayer, but it is easily quenched, if it be not frequently supplied; the Nourishment we should give it, consists in the often repeated Introversion or turning ourselves inwardly; in the Elevation of the Mind to Love, to Thankfulness, to an Offering-up ourselves, to a painful Complaint of our former Sins, and the Time we were without Love or Understanding.

We must say with Saint Augustine, O thou old and new Beauty, why have I lived so long without loving thee! is it possible that I have known thee so late, although thou art my greatest Felicity? This it is, that I sought thee where thou wast not, and that I sought thee not within myself, where thou wouldest that I should find thee.

There are Times wherein the prayer of the Heart, the internal Exercise of prayer becomes toilsom and painful to us, because the loving Inclinations of the Heart are more hidden and less sensible: We must

either stir up the Will by some Elevation of the Mind to Love, Confidence, Resignation, and turning inwardly; or remain quite resigned to God, performing at such Times a prayer of Patience, according to the Degree of the Soul's Attainment, and to suffer, as the Scripture faith, that Comfort tarries and is delayed; that so our Life may grow and be renewed.

But you will say and object, I perform nothing by my prayer, for I am within quite dry and scattered; God will hereby do something for you, if you are faithful, if your Scatterings are not willful, and against your Inclination.

Know ye not, that when we have had no Converse with a person for a long time, it seems strange to us? We must often converse with our Friends, to keep up a sincere and trusty Correspondence; even so is it with God also; the more we converse with God, the more free he will be with us, and we shall love him the more.

Resign yourselves to the Lord, and make him your Refuge by Means of prayer, and forget not to perform it, although you have no Taste in it; for whoso draws near to the Fire will be warmed by it, although he see it not. The more we withdraw from the Regions where the Sun shines, the more we advance towards the dark and cold Climates;

mates; but the nearer we approach the Sun, the stronger and more powerful we find his Heat.

Be indifferent in all what God pleases to give you in prayer, and seek only to perform his Will, and always depart fully satisfied how ever he may have dealt with you. Walk in Faith, and be resigned and assured that the Fruits of inward prayer are without Number, though the chiefeſt are not known in this Life, but are reserved to the glorious Day of Eternity.

For it is certain, that the Dryness and Darkness are the Time of the Soul's purification. There is an Advantage in it, when at such Times we walk more after the Heart than the Understanding; and exercise rather the Will in Love, Resignation and Patience, than the Understanding in sharp Cogitations and Meditations; since when the Understanding is without Operation, it is of no Service; but it is not so with the Heart, which never ceaseth to love, although without a sensible Feeling of it, yet its Working is so much perfecter, the more hidden it is.

Refuse not therefore to walk in this Way of the Heart and Will. This must be the Fruit or Working of the Oppressions and Sufferings, of the Trials, Temptations and spiritual Unfruitfulness, wherein we pour

out our Souls before the Lord, as Hannah, the Mother of Samuel did. He that will empty a Vessel, does no more but turn it upside down, and without more Trouble the Vessel empties itself; even so it is with those, who pour out their Souls in the Presence of the Lord, in as much as they do no more than gently stoop or bow to God, and follow the Inclination of the Soul, which she has obtained by the Grace of Jesus Christ, to unite herself with him as her Centre, so she flows after an unperceiveable Manner towards God, as a pure clear Water.

It is even as if Hannah said, the Excess of my Grief forceth me to pray; but I am no sooner before God, but I lose all other Objects, and do nothing else than follow the Drawings and Inclinations, which he himself has laid in me, to flow in God, and sink down in him; like a Vessel full of Water, which when emptied nothing remains in it, so will I wholly empty and sink myself quite in God. This is my sole Endeavour, I desire only this, and after this Manner I pray; my prayer is my Inclination, and my Inclination is my prayer; and the one and the other is brought forth through the Love and my pain.

Since Worship follows the Inclination of the Heart (without any particular Thinking

ing of it) and is equal with it, we reasonably worship indeed what we love in the highest Degree. Now when we love God above all, we worship him most truly. Therefore is the Command of Love mixed and united with the Command of Worship: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. For if we love a person, we are presently ready to serve him whom we love. He is our God, we must all call upon him as our God, and not as the God of another; that is, we must serve him as he requires us to serve, and not as others serve him, or pretend to serve him.

Remember, that the Kingdom of God, which consists in the internal spiritual Life, is compared to a Treasure hid in a Field; We find not this Treasure always by such as pretend to be something above others, and are in great Repute; much rather is it the less there, the more it is exposed to Danger: But this Treasure is by them who keep themselves hidden, and make not much Shew of themselves, since their Fire is concealed inwardly.

O how few Souls are there, who worship God alone, without a Mixture of other Gods; there are too many who mix the Service of God with Idolatry; they will worship God and the World, unite the inward

ward spiritual Life with Selfishness ; we do not wholly rely upon God, but will have earthly and fleshly Things with it ; this is impossible, such Things offend God, and move him to Anger ; God must be alone, without a Competitor.

How many think to please God when they perform him a Service mixt with Superstition, (which is an Abomination unto him) which they perform for profit and Hopes of earthly Benefit ? We imagine that serving God daily with Lip-Service, (from which the Heart is far off) he must therefore reward us with a thousandfold Good ; though at the same Time we offer to our Idols the disorderly Inclinations of the Mind, of Vanity and Self-love ; and we will have the holy Love and the worldly Love, one as the other, in one Heart together, though they cannot suffer each other.

When the worldly Love bears Rule in a Heart, we must conclude, that the divine Love is not there ; but when the divine and true Love of God and the Neighbour is well known in the Heart, and practised, so must we conclude, that it is and bears Rule therein ; although the Heart with sensible Temptations is uneasy, and seems to shew the Contrary, which is grievous enough.

However, this is true, that often that
which

which is our Grief and inward Suffering in our prayer and out of it, (if we rightly consider it) proceeds only from our selfish Views: whatever our pretences may be.

These are the Failings of the Persons in the working State, or actual Contemplation; they either look, by Recollection, backwards, or by some Reservation, they are stopped by something inferior to God. It follows, that these Souls are divided against themselves; for on one Side they are inclined and put forward to resign themselves to God, and on the other Side, they fear they may lose their Sight or Speculation, and Support of their own Prop; sometimes they give themselves up, then draw back, because they resign themselves in one Thing but not in the other, to a certain point, and no farther.

This Division, or divided State, wherein they act against themselves, keepeth them through their whole Life in an unspeakable inward Uneasiness, Anguish and Confusion, which Men often believe to be Afflictions of God, although they come only from the Softness or tenderness of their Souls: On one Side God draws and drives the Soul on to sink and lose herself in him; but on the other Side, the Soul draws back, and endures unsufferable Torments within, because she does not wholly belong to God, nor to herself.

Hence

Hence it comes, that courageous Persons, and such as with Magnanimity wholly give up themselves, that is, who wholly deny and sink themselves in God, cannot bear (without the utmost Discontent) that one should deal with God so cowardly, as to hold sometimes with him, and sometimes with the World; in that they well know, that this comes from the Failings of such Persons, and that all their Uneasiness is owing to their Timidity or Reserve towards God. They cannot well refrain from telling such Persons of it, which however offends them, yea, often makes them have an Aversion for those that inform them of their Failings; since, according to their Self-Love, they would rather that we should bewail them, and look on their Grievance with Compassion; nay, they would have us believe it to be God's Workings. But these enlightened and courageous Souls do not chuse to act in such a Manner, they must give Evidence to the Truth, which Self-love in the others cannot endure.

Thus must we refrain from all Conversation with the Creatures, especially with ourselves, (which consists in Selfishness) through Self-denial, and ascend the Mountain (spiritually) which is the highest Degree of Contemplation.

Let

Let us ascend the Mountain with Jesus Christ ; let us pray as he has prayed ; let us contemplate, let us love ; so shall we perform God's prayer.

O divine Jesus ! I join with thee in the Prayer which thou hast in Solitude by Night prayed, in this prayer of God ; grant that we may perform no other Prayer.

O God ! send this internal Spirit over the whole Earth ; so will it be anew created. Let this Spirit rest on the Waters of thy usual and wonted Grace, which thou offerest to all Men ; so will it distribute an overflowing Fruitfulness.

O give us new Hearts.

Amen, O Jesus !



THE

THE 121 PSALM OF DAVID,

Comfortably paraphrased
Out of

The 5th & 6th Commandments.

When in Distress and Need I lift mine Ey's above
Unto thy Mountains, Lord, with Sighings & Desire,
Thou lend'ft thy Ear in Love;
That I need not dismaid from thy sweet Face retire.
2 My Help and Defence comes, Of a faithful GOD, from thee!
Thou, who the Firmaments & this Earth too hast grounded:
No Mortal can help me;
Before thy Throne of Grace alone Relief is founded.
3. Thou makest that my Feet do neither slide nor stray,
Thou leadest me thyself, and in thy Paths dost guide me:
And shewest me the Way,
When World, Death & Dev'l with Snares & Gins abide me.
4. Keeper of Israel, thou sleep'ft and slumber'ft not,
Thy Eyes both Night and Day on those are always open
Who stedfast in their Lot
To thy Cross-Banner have thro' thy Blood, Jesus, written.
5. The Lord my Keeper is, Let overshadow me
The highest Power & Strength, who is my Rights Defender:
Then after Victory,
O mine I M M A N U E L ! Thank-offerings I will render.
6. When in my joyful Days the Sun with Darts come nigh,
Or Terror in the Night, the Moon should happ'n to smite me
Lord, haft'n to stand me by!
And with thy Pinions do thou cover me most rightly.
7. The Lord preserve me free from every Evil near;
Especially my Soul most fatherly to cover
From Devils Fraud and Snare;
That so henceforth there may no Evil near me hover.
8. And when thy Pleasure calls me from this World, O then
Grant that I may in thee depart, find soft and easie,
and joyful rise again:
Then lead thou me above, into thy Joy and Glory.

F I N I S.